

BUST OF SENATOR RANSOM UNVEILED AND PRESENTED

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Judge Winston sounded the keynote to General Ransom's character—courage. He referred to the incident in the Senator's life when he refused to sign the Alliance demands, and told them an anecdote of his grandfather, a brother of Nat Macon. Some parties in Warren county were uncertain as to which was the most desirable virtue, and the Senator's grandfather settled the dispute by stating that courage was the most desirable of all virtues.

When less than thirty, Ransom delivered an address at the University, opposing secession, in which he declared that the secessionists would draw a ruthless line across the republic although it passed over the grave of Washington and divided the ashes of the great father of our country, and that disunion would cover the American name with dishonor as long as the earth remained.

But for President Lincoln's unfortunate call for troops, North Carolina would not have joined the Confederacy. As one of the three peace commissioners to Montgomery, in February, 1861, Matt Ransom did all in his power to avert civil war. When Lincoln's call for troops was issued and Sumter was fired on, Vance was speaking at Wilkesboro for the Union and the Old Flag. A telegram was read by some one in the crowd, and as Vance afterwards remarked, when his hands fell they fell by the side of a secessionist.

When little more than a boy, Ransom was elected Attorney-General by a Democratic Legislature, although he himself was a Whig. Ransom soon left the Whig party because it went into knownothingism and anti-Catholicism. Ransom was the most Catholic of mortals, and loved the Union with an intense passion. He despised Toombs and Yancey and Rhett equally with Chandler, Wendell Phillips and Garrison. The former would have dissolved the Union to rid the Northern half of this dismembered country of slavery; the latter would have dissolved the Union to retain slavery in the Southern half. With such as these, whether Rodrigo killed Cassio or Cassio killed Rodrigo, 'twas their gain. The attitude of Ransom towards slavery, which he opposed, and his conduct in the war which followed, marked him as a distinct type of the Southern man, true to his convictions, yet truer to his neighbors, his friends and his people. With men of this kind, blood is ever thicker than water. Although he thought the war was useless and a crime and that it ought to be averted, and although he knew fully the horrors of civil war and the uselessness of endeavoring to fight against the North, backed by the moral and financial support of the entire world, yet he went to the front without murmuring. When Governor Ellis made his call for 20,000 volunteers, Ransom left these legislative halls, he then being a member of the House from Northampton, and went forth to defend his native State, and from the time he buckled on his sword on the 8th of May, 1861, as a lieutenant-colonel until he surrendered at Appomattox, wherever duty called or danger was the thickest this brave man could always be found. He participated in more than a dozen bloody battles. He was rapidly promoted until at the end his commission as major-general was won. His two brigades were commended by General Lee as having "behaved most handsomely." He and General Hoke were thanked by the Confederate Congress and our Legislature for the capture of Plymouth. He was wounded at Malvern Hill, and desperately wounded at Drewry's Bluff. He was presented a sword by his old command when he was first promoted.

Judge Winston described with much graphicness the battle of Five Forks. One horse had been killed under General Ransom. The lines were breaking away. He conceived it his duty to go to the front. Bareheaded, he waves his sword above his head and on his magnificent stallion, "Ion," he leads his men in battle. The smoke rolls away, and rider and horse are discovered prone upon the ground. Captain Johnson of the 35th and Captain Sherrill of the 29th Regiments rush forward and extricate him from his horse which has fallen dead upon the general. The small Confederate forces, with revolvers in hand, force their way to a place of safety.

When General Ransom surrendered at Appomattox, it was a complete surrender, with no mental reservations.

After the war it is not invidious to say of General Ransom that North Carolina turned to him with as much confidence as to any of her noble sons, and she turned not in vain.

The beautiful story of the release of A. G. Moore by Judge Brooks under the writ of habeas corpus, after the State judiciary had been declared exhausted, and the part that Matt W. Ransom played in this exciting drama, was then depicted by the speaker.

Ransom took his seat in the Senate, April 23, 1872. He was the most truly National Democrat that had crossed the Potomac since 1861 to take a seat in the Senate.

Senator Thurman arose and said that he felt sure that all the Sena-

tors would be glad to know that for the first time since 1861 every seat in that body was filled and every State represented.

Judge Winston next considered Matt W. Ransom as a Senator, and declared that for a quarter of a century, save two years, no State ever had a more safe or efficient public servant. He quoted from his great speech of 1875 which consumed eight hours in its delivery, "The South True to Her Duty." At the end of this speech Senator Ransom fell fainting upon the floor and had to be carried from the chamber. This speech profoundly impressed the distracted Nation at the time, and has become a part of the literature of the age. Senator Ransom's course in the Senate was one of peace and reconciliation. In order to pursue this course, the Senator often trod the winepress alone. In 1876 when Tilden was elected President, the country was threatened with civil war. Ransom and other conservative men from the South succeeded in raising a committee, of which Ransom was one, to take into consideration the entire question of the electoral vote. This he did although he knew that he was in danger of being criticised at home. Only a brave man is willing to lose when in losing he destroys himself and thereby saves his country. Such a man was Matt W. Ransom. He lost his Presidency, but he helped to save the Nation.

His services as chairman of the committee on the Potomac Fronts were of great value to Washington City. This committee reclaimed a large quantities of marsh land and added greatly to the beauty of our Capital City.

Senator Ransom voted to confirm Stanley Matthews as Justice of the Supreme Court and was roundly criticised for it at home, but the next year the tables were turned, for Stanley Matthews cast the deciding vote in the case of United States vs. Lee, thereby restoring General Lee's home, "Arlington," or its value, to his children.

He was chairman of the important committee on commerce, and was the National committeeman from this State. Perhaps his most useful service along commercial lines were in securing large appropriations for our rivers and harbors and in deepening the Cape Fear, to the great advantage of Wilmington, our chief seaport city. Step by step he rose in the councils of the Nation until he was finally made President pro tempore of the Senate, the only Southern man since 1861 who has been accorded this honor.

In 1893, Senator Ransom took his political life in his hand and voted to repeal the silver purchase clause of the Sherman act and thereby estranged thousands of friends in his native State.

The great property interests of the country came to look upon him as one of the safest men at Washington. His speeches on the stump were free from personality. The old soldiers came out to a man to hear him; grasped his hands and brushed away the unbidden tear. His speeches were usually three hours long, but no one ever quit the meeting while Ransom was speaking, and even his political opponents were captivated by his loftiness and flattered by his attentions. It may be truly said of his canvass of our State, that his speeches were so lofty and elevating and his illustrations and anecdotes so classic as to elevate and ennoble our citizenship. Ransom was in a sense a solitary man. He had few friends, but they were true as steel. "Great men are by nature solitary," says Aristotle.

Senator Ransom was no such trained lawyer as Senator Badger. He was not a student and a scholar like Senator Graham. He had not the technical knowledge of Senator Haywood, nor was he the popular idol like Senator Vance, but in his influence with the President of the United States, with the departments, and with his colleagues in the Senate, and in the services which his peculiar talents enabled him to render to the South, he was superior to them all. In fine, Ransom was the Senator, every inch of him. When he took his seat in that august body he made a fixed resolve so to conduct himself in his high office that the best thought of the world would approve his conduct, and that no critic could point to North Carolina as a narrow or provincial State. His greatest service to the State was in the defeat of the force bill in 1888. Senator Hoar, in his autobiography, tells us that he had gone around and seen every Republican Senator and that they had all agreed to support his election bill, which he called a "very simple measure." When the bill came up for discussion, parliamentary tactics were resorted to and the bill was finally defeated. Senator Gorman declared that the bill would have passed but for the exertions of Matt W. Ransom, who never lost faith or courage. If this bill had passed the Senate, and it had already passed the House, bloodshed and disorder would have again occurred all over the South. One shudders to think of the results that would have followed in the train of such a force bill. Southern folk are much too hot-blooded for such restraints.

"Hic labor, hoc opus est."

Senator Ransom was appointed in 1895 minister to Mexico. This position carries a large salary, and Sen-

ator Ransom as arbitrator in an important matter, was paid a handsome fee. With these large sums he returned to his simple country home, and with this money and several abundant cotton crops, and the sale of timber, he paid his debts and placed himself in a position of affluence. His last days were his best days. He was known as the Grand Old Roman. He was a man of superb figure, fully six feet tall, weighing fully 260 pounds. His head was much above the average. His countenance was noble and his eyes betokened the worth of the man.

Senator Ransom was no less fortunate in his death than in his long and brilliant career. His death scene resembled that of Sir Walter Scott. As Scott was gazing for the last time upon the Tweed and the hills beyond, he turned to Lockhart and said, "Be a good man, Lockhart, be a good man," and instantly died. It was a beautiful October day when Senator Ransom passed away. He had been not quite so well for several months, but no one thought of his early death. He was sitting on the bedside when the messenger came to him, and he turned to his boys with a bright eye and a sustaining courage and said, "Do right, boys, always do right. God bless your mother. I am going." And in an instant he died.

The Charlotte Observer the next day, under the editorial caption, "Dead, My Lords and Gentlemen!" declared in broken accents that the greatest of North Carolinians had answered the final summons. And The News and Observer said that in many respects he attained greater reputation than any other of our citizens in the Federal Congress.

Can we men of Carolina measure up to this National standard? His life teaches that no public servant shall vote for any measure simply because it is popular, but he shall, in accordance with his best judgment, espouse only those equal measures which the best thought of the world approves, and he shall do all these things quietly, deliberately and unafraid.

"For him, who in a hundred battles stood
Scorning the cannon's mouth,
Grimy with flame and red with foeman's blood,
For thy sweet sake, O South;

Who, wise as brave, yielded his conquered sword
At a vain war's surcease,
And spoke, thy champion still, the statesman's word
In the calm halls of peace;

Who pressed the ruddy wine to thy faint lips,
Where thy torn body lay,
And saw afar time's white-sailing ships
Bringing a happier day;

Oh, mourn for him, dear land that gave him birth!
Bow low thy sorrowing head!
Let thy seared leaves fall silent on the earth
Whereunder he lies dead!

In field and hall, in valor and in grace,
In wisdom's livery,
Gentle and brave, he moved with knightly pace,
A worthy son of thee!

Introducing Hon. A. H. Boyden.

The next speaker was Hon. A. H. Boyden, State Senator from Rowan. In introducing him, Hon. J. Bryan Grimes said:

"Among the most loyal sons of the State who have always been in the forefront to promote her interest, none have surpassed in patriotism Hon. A. H. Boyden.

"Mr. Boyden as a boy soldier on the staff of that famous old commander, General Hoke, knew Ransome well in war and in peace, and was always his staunch political and personal friend.

He will now address you."

Col. Boyden was greeted with applause as he arose. In eloquent words he paid tribute to Senator Ransom as follows:

Senator Boyden's Tribute.

"Mr. Chairman:
"Matt W. Ransom was a patriot, an orator, a soldier and a statesman. He was all that, and he was also a God-fearing, Christian gentleman. I am proud to say that he was my warm personal friend, and I am glad this opportunity is afforded me to pay an humble tribute to his honored memory.

"I have seen him amid the shock of battle as undaunted, cool and intrepid he sat his horse while amid the storm of bullets and plunging iron from the fiery cannon's mouth he led his cheering men to a glorious victory.

"I have seen his magnificent presence upon the hustings when for hours he held the listening multitude entranced with his matchless oratory, as with his eloquent tongue he pleaded with his people for the integrity of his State and for Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

"I have seen him upon the floor of the United States Senate, where for twenty-four years he served his State and country with such conspicuous ability and where he was recognized as one of the great leaders in that greatest deliberative body on earth. There I have heard his voice in eloquent tones pleading for his stricken Southland, which he loved so much.

"His place in history is among the State's immortals, and his friends and the people of the State honor themselves and honor the State in placing this

splendid bust of him in the Capitol among the State's dead statesmen where it will be an inspiration to the youths of our land to stimulate their ambition to serve their State with the love and fidelity he did.

"General Ransom loved his friends, and no man had truer, more loyal and devoted friends. His soldiers loved him and followed him wherever he led. The people loved him, and honored him with the highest position within the gift of the State. His devotion to North Carolina was unbounded, and there never was a time when he was not ready to make any sacrifice for her honor.

"He was an honest man, and his integrity and uprightness in both public and private life, his splendid manners, but simple life, are a glorious heritage to his family and his friends.

"Whether in war or in peace, in adversity or prosperity, for near half a century he was a leader, a defender and deliverer of our people. He had been with them on the march, at the camp fire, in the lurid flames of battle, in famine and pestilence. He suffered with them amid the pangs of cold and hunger.

"As he led and guided them then, so when the terrible conflict was over, amid the cruel, sorrowful days of reconstruction, he guided and led them through a wilderness of woes back to freedom and peace, to a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

"While he may have had deep and powerful impulses and resentment at times, his great heart always beat in tender sympathy and charity for the poor, the down trodden and oppressed.

"His sense of magnanimity and sense of justice was deep and strong, and his kindly nature as sweet and tender as a woman's.

"If I could only do this great, good man, my friend, justice; if I could only portray, as his eloquent tongue could, his life and character and his virtues, it would give me supreme joy.

"But his great deeds, his life and his virtues are enshrined in the hearts of a brave and affectionate people.

"When he died he left a lofty name, A light, a landmark on the cliffs of fame."

Introducing Hon. B. S. Gay.

The last of the speeches concerning Senator Ransom was by Hon. B. S. Gay, Representative from Northampton county. In introducing him Col. Grimes said:

"The commission has invited Hon. B. S. Gay, a distinguished North Carolinian to address you. Mr. Gay was Senator Ransom's fellow countyman, friend, neighbor and associate.

"He loved him well, and will talk to you of the General as he knew him.

"There was applause for Mr. Gay as he arose, and in words which came from the heart he paid a splendid tribute to Senator Ransom, speaking as follows:

Hon. B. S. Gay's Address.

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: As the representative here of the good people of Northampton county, the home of General Ransom, and as a member of the House of Representatives, I thank the Historical Commission for the splendid bust of the soldier, statesman and devoted patriot, which is an expression of your own public spirited patriotism, your appreciation of his great qualities of mind and soul, and of his noble deeds in war and in peace, and of your love of the 'true, the beautiful and the good.' I shall ever remember with pride that I was so honored as to participate, although so feebly, with the statesmen and orators who have met here to do honor to him who, while living, 'crowned himself with living bays.'

"You have been told in eloquent words, as only the scholar and orator as he is, could tell, of his heroic deeds in times that tried men's souls; of his bravery and moral courage in times of peace no less than in times of war; and of his devotion to duty which nerved him to advocate the interests of his people, as he believed, against their opinions, sometimes, unawed by impending political and financial ruin. It has been recited to you how he concentrated all his powers of mind and soul, while United States senator, to the bringing about of a reconciliation between the lately hostile sections for the salvation of his own loved southland, and the glory of the whole country. You have been told how, by his wisdom, his tact, and his magnetic influence he, as no other man could have done, prevented the enactment of the Force Bill, which would probably have precipitated another war between the States, and would certainly have prolonged the horrors of sectional discord for generations. You have been told how, when the best men of the State were incarcerated and were to be convicted without law by the infamous Kirk, and the writ of habeas corpus was powerless, and the State judiciary was exhausted in fact, the wisest and best lawyers and statesmen looked to Ransom as the only Moses who could solve the insoluble problem, and how he, as ever, measured up to the great occasion, and with the persuasive powers, the persistency and the magnetism which he only possessed, influenced Judge Brooks, of the Fed-

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